



Committee on Homeland Security **Democrats**

Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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CONGRESSMAN THOMPSON RESPONDS TO AVIATION REPORT

March 16, 2005, Washington, DC — Congressman Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, made the following statement about the Government Accountability Office's report released this week on the security of our nation's aviation sector:

"Protecting our nation's skies is one of the most important tasks of the Department of Homeland Security. The GAO report underscores the lack of structure and effort from the Administration on aviation security. As long as the mismanagement and careless spending of the Department continues, our skies and airports remain prime targets by terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda. It is time to reorganize, reconstruct, and rebuild the Department so it can functionally do its job of making sure that the flying public is as secure as it needs to be," said Congressman Thompson.

The report, entitled *Aviation Security: Systematic Planning Needed to Optimize the Deployment of Checked Baggage Screening Systems* (GAO-05-365), recommends the Transportation Security Administration assess the cost and benefits of installing in-line EDS baggage screening systems at airports that may not have these new systems, to estimate all funds needed to adequately install the new in-line systems, to collect all the data and prepare plans needed to install the systems, and to collaboratively work with airport screeners who are expected to share the costs and benefits of the in-line systems.

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